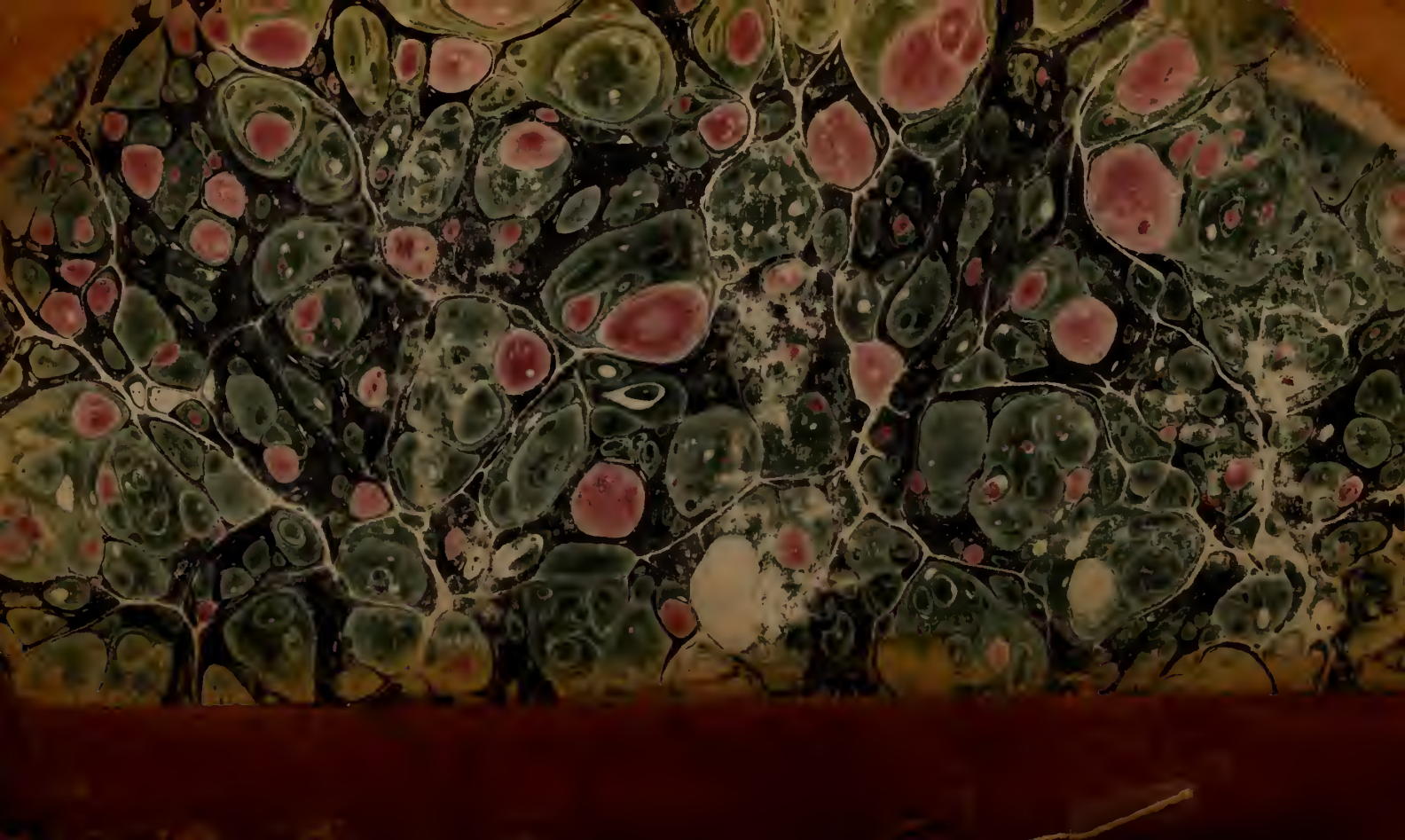

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From the Rev. W. B. SPRAGUE, D.D. Sept. 1839.

Sprague Collection. Vol. 448

A Word for the African.

A

SERMON,

FOR THE

BENEFIT OF THE

American Colonization Society,

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWARK,

JULY 24, 1825.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM T. HAMILTON,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEWARK.

NEWARK:

PRINTED BY W. TUTTLE & CO.

1825.

Newark, July 25, 1825.

Rev. and respected Sir,

The subscribers, members of the two Congregations to whom your Sermon on the subject of the American Colonization Society was yesterday addressed, are deeply impressed with the importance of the objects adverted to and connected with this Society: They cannot but believe that these great objects will be essentially promoted by a more general diffusion of the excellent sentiments contained in that Discourse—and they therefore take the liberty respectfully to request of you a copy for publication. They hope, Sir, that when it is considered how seldom a plea for injured Africa has been heard, you will favour them with yours.

With great esteem,

We are your obedient servants.

[Signed by a number of the members of the 1st and 2d Congregations.]

Rev. Wm. T. Hamilton.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

1st and 2d Presbyterian Congregations, Newark, N. J.

Prudence might perhaps require the Preacher to decline publishing this discourse; but an application from members of both the churches before whom it was delivered, so numerous and so respectable, ought to have weight. That it was hastily written, the numerous engagements of the preceding week may testify: that it has many defects all may discover: but that notwithstanding all this, it may be of some use in extending throughout our parishes a knowledge of the important subjects on which it dwells, your request seems to import; and in the humble hope that it may, it is now presented to you. That I have spoken temperately I hope,—that I have dealt faithfully I also hope,—and that I have spoken candidly, I am sure. That it may answer the end for which you have requested its publication, and effect some little good on behalf of our brother African, may God grant: a richer return could not be desired by you, or the preacher.

Wm. T. Hamilton,

Newark, July 26, 1825.

SERMON.

ISAIAH, IX. 2.

THE PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT.

To discover the more immediate fulfilment of this prophecy we can be at no loss; for the spirit of inspiration that dictated it has pointed out its accomplishment. It was when, on a rumour of his forerunner's incarceration by Herod, the lowly Jesus left Nazareth, and came and dwelt in Capernaum, a city upon the coast of the sea of Tiberias, in the borders of Zabulon and Napthalim. This was done, adds the Evangelist, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Napthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light." This territory was, in fact, a part of Galilee; and was denominated Galilee of the Gentiles, because immediately bordering on the seat of the Gentiles and long occupied by them. It had partaken largely in their idolatry, and drunk deep of all their abominations. Lying on the sea of Tiberias, and in the vicinity of the Syrians, it was the first that suffered from their ravages, and it shared largely also in the calamities inflicted by the Chaldeans. Foremost in crime and first in

suffering, it was first also in the participation of Immanuel's favours. More deeply shrouded in darkness, on it the Sun of Righteousness first shed his cheering light.

In addressing you from these words, I shall

I. Endeavour to ascertain by a brief examination, the import of the striking figures employed in the text—to walk in darkness—to see light.

II. Advert to some few instances of the accomplishment of this prophecy—and thus gradually approximate the subject, which, constrained alike by duty and inclination, I would submit to your serious attention.

I. Light and darkness are terms of frequent occurrence in the sacred scriptures, and are applied in a figurative sense to the moral world, as, when employed literally, to the natural. Thus *darkness* is used to denote *ignorance*. Paul speaking of the Heathen destitute of revelation, says, "their foolish heart was darkened;" "having the understanding darkened."

Ignorance, and especially ignorance of God, is ever attended by depravity. Hence darkness is also used to express *wickedness*. "Have no fellowship with the works of darkness" says the Apostle. "He that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." And the spotless purity of God is intended, when it is said "In him is no darkness at all." Now as ignorance and wickedness necessarily entail misery, the same may be applied to wretchedness and perplexity, as in the last verse of the preceding chapter: "They shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to

darkness." Thus Joel describes the distress consequent on God's visiting for sin : "The day of the Lord cometh, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness," which is agreeable to the explanation the Psalmist gives of the same term, "Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and in iron." And the wretchedness of the damned is expressed under the same image, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The three ideas then of *ignorance*, *depravity* and *wretchedness*, are combined in the term *darkness*; and in this sense does Isaiah appear to use it, when, to depict the condition of mankind destitute of revelation, and referring to the same event as in the text, he cries, "Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." To walk in darkness therefore, is to be living and acting under the combined influence of ignorance of God, and its sure attendants wickedness and wretchedness.

Light, as we might suppose, is used to express the contrary of all this, and conveys the idea of true knowledge, the knowledge of God. So Isaiah: "To the law, and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Paul speaks of the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, and says, "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It frequently designates holiness or purity, as when it is said, "God is light"—and of christians, "ye are the children of the light :" and Satan is said "to transform himself into an an-

gel of light," while it imports happiness or enjoyment also. "Light is sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart." And again, "the Lord is my light and my salvation." Hence, because in the gospel alone we obtain the true knowledge of God; by it alone we are taught to love and practice holiness; and by it the glorious hopes of immortal blessedness are presented before us,—the gospel is called light—glorious light, and its recipients are styled children of light. And because the Lord Jesus Christ is the great author of salvation, the sum and substance of the gospel, who purchased its blessings with his blood, first promulgated the knowledge of them in his personal ministry when on earth, still does it by his ministers, and by his spirit which he sends forth, enlightens men's consciences to feel their need of these blessings, and disposes their hearts cordially to receive them, he is emphatically styled, "the light of the world"—"the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings." So the prophet announces his advent by saying to a world in darkness, and to a people enveloped in gross darkness, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." And aged Simeon, on receiving the infant Messiah into his arms, calls him "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." And Zacharias, in immediate anticipation of it exclaims, "Through the tender mercy of our God the day spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death—to guide our feet into the way of peace." To see light, therefore, as used in the text, is to have the privileges of the gospel, of which Christ is the author and the subject, and by means

of which, he imparts true knowledge, inward holiness, and present peace, to issue in eternal blessedness. Well, therefore, does the prophet depict the advantages consequent on the introduction of the gospel, by saying, "*The people which sat in darkness have seen a great light.*" I proceed as proposed,

II. To advert to some instances of the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Its first and most obvious accomplishment is that pointed out by the Evangelist, when Jesus Christ, the light of men, appeared in person, and first published among the borderers on the sea of Tiberias the glad tidings of the gospel by preaching repentance. This was indeed a great light, appearing to a people that walked in darkness. They were, it is true, connected with the Jewish Church, and the light of the law was there; but this light was totally obscured by the miserable expositions and absurd traditions that had usurped its place. We may form some idea of their knowledge of the Mosaic law by which they professed to be governed, from the fact, that the Gadarenes, natives of one of their towns, actually maintained large herds of swine, in direct *violation* of the law. With their wickedness and obstinacy, Christ himself upbraids them; while they were also sunk in wretchedness and debasement. They had been long harassed by their heathen neighbours; at that very time, they were groaning in subjection to a foreign power, and were despised wherever they were known; so that a *Galilean*, was every where a term of contempt; —nay, they were held in derision even by the rest of the Jews, insomuch that Nathaniel, a grave and guileless Israelite, asked in astonishment, "Can any good thing come out of Galilee?" Yet among

this degraded people was the *great light* first seen; and it continued to shine and diffuse its gladdening rays over the country of Galilee and Judea, and even in Samaria, for the space of three years, until it seemed to be extinguished on Calvary's top,—when all again was darkness, and the powers of darkness triumphed.

But not many days after, when a little band who had walked in this light, and who found some feeble glimmerings of it yet left among them, were sitting solitary and retired, devoutly calling on the God of Israel,—the house was shaken, and the very foundations of the city rocked. For with the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, the spirit of light descended.—He sat in flaming fire on their heads—he breathed through their souls —he took possession of their hearts—they were fired with zeal, and enlightened in the truth. To the wondering multitudes fast thickening around them, they exhibited the glories of Christ, the light of the world, and called to repentance through him. The word was terrible as the rolling thunder, resistless as the rapid lightning's stroke; three thousand sunk at once beneath its power, merged in the horrors of conscious guilt. They felt they had been ever involved in darkness, and were still groping in it. But the day spring from on high had visited them—their darkness was dissipated—their vision was strengthened—they could steadily contemplate, and richly enjoy the blessings of the glorious light of the gospel; they henceforth walked in the light and rejoiced in it. For the Sun of righteousness had now arisen; he showed his orb full and resplendent on the verge of the horizon, lovely and cheering to the sons of light, but terrible to the sight and withering to the strength of

the children of darkness. His career was begun, and what could arrest it? He shed his light upon Jerusalem and Judea—it beamed upon Samaria too, and she awoke as from the sleep of death, and put away from her the abominations of witchcraft and sorcery. He scattered his bright rays abroad throughout the cities and hamlets of Asia Minor, discovering the horrors of cruel darkness, and checking its vile works. Macedonia, Greece, and Italy, with its proud capital, the mistress of the world, felt its sacred beams darting through every part of their borders. The idols tottered and fell; their stupid worshippers were confounded; ashamed of their obscene rites, they deserted the temples.

But the prince of darkness, though invaded and alarmed, was not idle. He summoned his legions, and they darkened the moral atmosphere with clouds of prejudice; they poisoned it with venomous passions, and sealed men's eyes in tenfold ignorance. But all in vain. The light of truth shot through these clouds, dissipated these pestilential vapours, and the eyes of thousands were opened. Philosophers hailed this light; and senators and orators welcomed it to their families and their bosoms. In vain was the sword wielded; the rack and the gibbet were plied in vain. Terror could not dissipate—rivers of streaming blood could not extinguish the light of the gospel. The fiercest torrents of persecution poured down against it, could not suppress it—they served but as oil thrown into the fire, to feed and strengthen its flame, make it extend wider and farther, and shine more resplendent and clear. Its progress ceased not—till it had enlightened every province and every hamlet: till the Roman Eagle, spreading his

golden wings above the pretorian camp, stooped from his height to gaze upon its emblems glowing on the banners waving beneath him. It stayed not —till it had received the homage of the Cæsars in their palace,—and shed a richer lustre on the imperial diadem.

For a while the light shone clear and bright, with all the splendour of the opening day, throughout the Roman world. But mists began gradually to arise and overspread the earth. Every revolving age but deepened the increasing gloom, which every where brooded in unbroken darkness ; save where at distant intervals a transient meteor of glowing piety shot its dubious light amid surrounding horror. But these partial interruptions soon ceased, and the light seemed utterly lost ; for behold, again "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." The night was long and gloomy; but at length morn was approaching; the dawn was at hand. Some faint glimmerings were discerned amid the valleys of Piedmont—they were hailed in the bosom of France. British Wickliffe saw and dared to proclaim it. Hungary heard the sound, and sent forth her Huss and her Jerome to point to the kindling beams that streaked the dim horizon. They fell,—but they sunk not to oblivion. Their martyral fire blazed through the regions of darkness, and startled its slumbering inmates : 'twas the light of the morning star,—lost but in opening day. Their expiring voice sounded loud and clear, like the carols of the lark soaring on high, to welcome the first beams of the rising sun. For scarce was the fire extinguished, scarce was their voice lost, when the full tide of morning light played on the lofty towers of Wittenburg,—roused its drowsy watchmen—and Luther arose in his

might, the champion of truth, the messenger of light. It was appalling to see the horrors of that "darkness" which then covered "the whole earth, and gross darkness the people." But he advanced undismayed in the face of it, and with unfaltering voice he called on Europe, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Step after step did he advance on the regions of darkness. He pointed to the Sun of Righteousness—he showed his glory beaming from the cross—he unveiled the beauties of the word of God, and sent it abroad among the people. The man of sin waged desperate warfare; but truth prevailed, and light spread fast. The empire of darkness was shaken to its centre, and its monarch trembled on his tottering throne, when he saw his efforts foiled,—when he beheld the light of truth blazing, and its banners floating, on every town throughout the fairest parts of Germany, of Denmark, Sweden, France, Switzerland, and Britain. Oh! when the gospel in its simplicity was heard, where late the mumbling priest had vented his legendary dreams,—when the pang of conviction thrilled the bosom, and the secret earnest cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," burst from the trembling lips of him who late deemed confession to the priest an ample satisfaction for his crimes,—when the cheerful praises of Jesus resounded from the tongues of thousands, in those splendid buildings where late the solemn mockery of mass and lawless invocations to the saints were witnessed, though angels rejoiced at the sound and tuned their harps to higher notes and sweeter symphonies—it grated harsh upon the ears of hell's dark inmates, and chilled them with agonizing horror. For then

it was undeniable, "The people which walked in darkness had seen a great light,—they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them had the light shined;" a light at which every fiend of darkness sickened, and before which he fled in dismay. This light, thus scattered abroad over Europe, lived and flourished. It spread in Britain's isle, though tyranny opposed and bigotry scowled: slowly yet surely it advanced; retarded, not stopped, by prejudice, persecution, and error. Yet during the painful struggle there, some pure sparks of gospel light shot across the Atlantic deep, and twinkled through surrounding darkness amid the forests of these western shores. They died not away, but fanned by the gentle airs of heaven, they lived and glowed, and spread along the coast, till a goodly chain of stations was formed, blessed with the pure light of heaven, and gleaming like so many watch-fires on the borders of an invaded realm. The native tribes of Indians that then roamed through the forests, were "a people that walked in darkness." They discerned indeed the light, but it was yet afar off; it beamed neither clearly nor steadily; and they seemed rather to have regarded it as the *ignis fatuus* to lure them to ruin, than a ray from Heaven to light the abodes of darkness, and shine on the path that leads to God. But the time was approaching when they too, thick as was the darkness in which they walked, should see and gladly hail this great light. In 1646, John Elliot, an English emigrant, who was settled as pastor of the flock at Roxbury, in Massachusetts, (a man of God and a man of prayer, whose heart burned towards these sons of the forest with whom he was surrounded,) after having with patient application acquired the

language of these Indians, began to unite with his stated pastoral duties the benevolent work of labouring for their conversion to Christ. With apostolic zeal he toiled, and the Lord smiled upon his efforts; for the first Indian church established in North America was formed of his converts, forty-five in number, in 1660, at Natick, about eighteen miles south west of Boston, where they had erected a house of worship. By him, and other Christian ministers roused by his example, numerous other Indian churches were formed; and before his death he was permitted to see twenty-four native Indian preachers labouring for the conversion of their red brethren. Such was his indefatigable zeal, that he translated and published the whole of the scriptures in their language, besides several smaller works. Deservedly then, is John Elliot styled the apostle of the Indians. Through his instrumentality it was that these tribes, which walked in darkness, saw the great light of Christ and his gospel. Nor has this light ever been totally lost among them. I need not tell you of the self denying and successful labours of Sergeant, and Edwards, and West, at Stockbridge; and of Sergeant the son, who yet labours among the same tribe at New-Stockbridge, whither they recently removed. I need not remind you of Brainard, who was ordained in this town, and in the church I serve, June 12, 1744, and who, during one of the first of those blessed visitations ever vouchsafed to our American churches, called revivals, gathered in one year 77 Indian converts to Christ: nor of the persevering labours of the Moravian Brethren:—nor of the redoubled efforts of the present day to enlighten the sons of the forest. What then is the result of all this? It is, my Brethren,

of the most encouraging character. For, while our population has spread from the Atlantic to the vast plains watered by the Missouri and its various tributaries, and from the borders of the grand chain of northern lakes to the shores of the Mexican gulph, carrying with them the bible, and erecting sanctuaries, and establishing the ordinances of Christ's house,—among the aboriginal tribes, who for this purpose have been aided, and are still aided, by the contributions of the American churches and the labours of American missionaries,—we behold nations settled, organized, and civilized—numerous flourishing schools maintained, where the bible and religious books are employed, and several Indian churches formed for Christ: nay, even native Indians preaching the gospel, and that too, in some instances, after having received a regular education. Surely, may we say, this people that sat in darkness has seen a great light, and over this whole land, lately in darkness and the shadow of death, hath the light shined! And after this rapid glance we might exclaim,—not a hill throughout these confederate States and their borders, on which the olive branch casteth not its shade:—not a vale in which the rose of Sharon blossoms not:—over this whole land does the Sun of Righteousness look abroad in unclouded splendour—and every habitation is enlightened with his cheering rays.

But no!—alas no!—Our favoured country is not throughout, the undisputed region of light. A cloud has long been hovering over us: but now it gathers thicker, and spreads wider, and broods in darkness hourly deepening over many a fair portion of our land. I allude not to the extensive regions of the west, where

the fast increasing population alarmingly outstrips the means of religious instruction,—where the churches, once planted and watered, are now destitute of labourers, and though feeble and declining, still cling to each other, and send forth to these Atlantic states the earnest cry for the water of life, but cry in vain,—where infidelity and vice leagued hand in hand stalk abroad unmasked,—where the godly are few and fast diminishing,—while the young are growing up in heathenism, and the feeble spark of piety yet found there, is just ready to expire and leave behind unmingled darkness! Gloomy as is this prospect, I refer not to it. It is a nearer point I look at: it is a more painful scene arrests my view: it is thousands, nay almost millions in our midst, who, though light shines all around them, are yet sitting in darkness, and "in the shadow of death:" It is a whole people, entirely distinct from us, yet effectually intermingled among us, who have no bible, no hope: an entire people, who, though dwelling in the cradle of liberty, are shackled in the cruel bonds of slavery. This is darkness—horrible darkness, in the midst of light! It discovers a heavy cloud wide spread, and darkly lowering over us—in view of which the stoutest heart may tremble! Oh, 'tis a scene that carries us back irresistibly to a period gone by—a period of horrible crime.

With two millions of our species in the midst of us, of whom nearly all are degraded to the condition, and almost the character of brutes, —who are avowedly kept in the grossest ignorance from policy, because it is deemed unsafe to instruct them,—from whom the bible is withheld, and who are scarcely ever permitted to sit under the gospel sound,—whose continuance

among us as they now are is allowed by all unsafe, and by many deemed impossible,—while yet every project of alteration seems dangerous if not futile—how, we cannot but ask, how was this scourge of our land introduced here? Humanity blushes, and the heart sickens, as truth unfolds the horrid tale, and points to the dark slaveship hovering afar across the eastern waves on Afric's injured shore,—and tells us how the ruffian crew, with no right but power, no law but that of shameless violence, was wont boldly to seize upon their hapless victims, regardless of their bitter cries of anguish and despair,—immure them in the loathsome dungeons of the vessel,—and then, spreading wide their canvass, waft across the stormy deep their human cargo to the mart of blood! There greeted by kindred souls, they landed their wretched captives, sickening at the light of day, and destined to endure aggravated misery. There man bought and sold his brother man; there all the sacred ties of nature were rudely rent asunder; the husband parted from his wife; the wretched mother was severed from her darling children; and all these miserable victims of wanton power, whose life had been a scene of quietness and ease under a genial sky and on a fertile soil, were compelled thenceforth to drudge, and toil, and labour for the ease of some luxurious lord,—themselves denied the common charities of nature, and almost the name of man!—And thus was *slavery*—the dread of this generation, and alas! but too probably, the scourge of another, introduced by our forefathers, and entailed on us their children.

True it is, that much has been done, (and we rejoice to say her full share has by this coun-

try been done,) to stop this mighty evil, and to efface this loathsome stain upon the name of man. But, strange as it may seem, it is also true, that notwithstanding all the horrors and the dangers which experience shows are its consequents, this impious traffic in human blood is checked only, not suppressed. The mart still is held; the cargo is still landed; the lash still sounds, and still the cry of anguish rises at the ruthless stroke,—while luxury crowns the planter's board—pleasure dances in his halls—he lives in splendour, and he dies in peace. But the hour, the awful hour of retribution is approaching: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!" And how amply he does so, let St. Domingo testify.

Brethren, I am not indulging in mere declamation; nor am I desirous to rouse feelings of indignation against our brethren of the South. The guilt of this continued traffic, I sincerely believe, scarcely rests at all on this country; and many of those who live amid the horrors of slavery, feel its evils more sensibly than we can, and deplore them as truly. They are the sufferers—and they deserve our compassion and our sympathy, rather than our indignation. They found the evil existing; 'twas entailed upon them by their predecessors. They feel its horrors—but how are they to remove them? They see the danger; but how is it to be averted? The wisdom, and *the united energies of the whole nation must be put under requisition, if any thing is to be effected.* Slavery, to an alarming extent, exists among us as a nation; the guilt is a national one—the danger is national—and the effort for its complete removal must be national, or it will be vain. Hence it is of the utmost importance that the eyes of all be opened. The injustice of slave-

ry—its attendant evils—and its awful dangers, must be plainly and candidly exhibited, that each individual may see it is his duty to put forth his best effort to clear himself of guilt, and to avert the threatening danger. Now, though it be true, perhaps, that you and I individually are clear from all guilt attendant on a participation in slavery, yet, if it is a national sin, if it threatens a national calamity, and demands a national effort to remove it, then should you and I, or any of us, fail to ascertain what should be done, and fail to employ our utmost exertions to accomplish it, we contract personal guilt, and must expect, in one way or another, to suffer personal chastisement, either here or hereafter.

It was with a conviction of these truths, accompanied by clear views of the magnitude of the object, and the importance of immediate exertion, that the American Colonization Society was organized at Washington, with distinguished patronage, in January 1817; chiefly through the exertions of the late Rev. Robert Finley of Baskenridge, in this State. "To colonize in Africa, with their own consent, the free people of colour residing in the United States," is the exclusive object of this Society; and it numbers forty-three auxiliaries, of the most respectable character, in different parts of the Union. This Society, notwithstanding the most formidable difficulties which long opposed its success, has already effected much. In 1820, a company of coloured emigrants, accompanied by three Agents of the Society, selected a place for settlement on the coast of Africa, which proved unhealthy; so that another tract of land, including Cape Montserado, on the western coast of Africa, having been procured for this purpose in 1821, by the a-

gency of Dr. Ayres, the colony was removed thither in 1822. It is situated on Cape Montserado, and is named Liberia. It contains a population of nearly 400 coloured emigrants ; and since the visit of the Society's agent in August last, "it has enjoyed a degree of prosperity," (says the report of the Society,) "and been marked by a rapidity of improvement, which has rarely been exceeded in the history of any infant colony." It is planted on the shores of Africa, a vast continent almost universally enveloped in the deepest shades of idolatry, superstition and wretchedness: a wretchedness greatly aggravated by their long intercourse with the unprincipled slave-dealer. On the very borders of these benighted heathen, is planted the American colony of Liberia for coloured emigrants. "On Cape Montserado, (continues the report,) now stands in lonely beauty, a Christian village, on which God has graciously smiled. There flourish the virtues of the gospel, defended by the Almighty from the influences of surrounding paganism,—cherished and refreshed by the dews of his grace :" For, my brethren, it is animating to learn that this infant colony was blessed, in September last, with a revival of religion ; which, if we consider its population, was one of unusual power. Out of less than four hundred souls, "thirty, of all ages and characters indiscriminately, have publicly professed their faith in Christ, and have thus far continued to walk as the truly regenerate children of God." "There is throughout the colony a prevailing increasing spirit of obedience, industry, enterprise and piety. Schools are established, churches are building, government is respected, agriculture receives general attention, and the wilderness is retiring before the face of civilized man."

For in their schools many children of the natives from the surrounding country are received and instructed:—one native adult at least has been converted* ; and even the king of a neighbouring nation, in conversation with a colonist who visited him, gave unequivocal tokens of awakening, and earnestly implored for himself and his people, instruction in the gospel. Surely in Africa also,—"*the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.*"

The Colonization Society have shown what may be done. None can now deny the perfect practicability of colonizing our coloured population on the coast of Africa, to any extent the resources of this Society will reach. The design is a grand one; it is a highly benevolent one; but it can never be realized in all its greatness, *until the nation shall put forth its strength:* and then it may—and then it will be accomplished. Yet suppose this cannot be effected, and that the project of clearing this country of its coloured population through this channel, should prove abortive: still a most important object is hereby secured: a missionary station is established at Liberia, which is already blessed of God, and which promises fair to become the means of evangelizing Africa; for this, if ever done, must be effected by coloured missionaries,—of the same race with the people they would convert: to them the climate is congenial,—to whites it is destructive. That light has already been shed on the borders of Africa, which, we trust, is destined to continue, and to spread, until it shall ultimately enlighten the whole of that vast continent, as yet, "a land of darkness and of the shadow of death."—But this light to which we are looking for results so

* See American Sunday School Magazine for July 1825—Page 217.

important, is yet but a feeble spark;—it needs, Christians, your fervent prayers, to keep it from dying, and to fan it to a flame;—it needs your charities, your liberal contributions, to supply it with fresh fuel, that it may increase and acquire permanent stability.—Need I say more?

I might appeal to your *justice*, and remind you of the long catalogue of miseries inflicted for ages on Africa and her children, by your fathers and mine: and then ask you, when it is so easy to make a return so rich as is the boon of the gospel,—do you see no obligation resting on you to contribute towards effecting it? The voyage to Liberia, is comparatively short: the cost to the emigrant passenger does not exceed twenty dollars. "This sum," (observes an auxiliary society in a petition to the legislature of Virginia on the subject,) "is, to the coloured emigrant, the price of political liberty,—of social happiness,—of moral and religious improvement:" from all which, even the *free negro*, while among us, is in a great measure debarred, by the mere force of invincible prejudice. Is it not an act of justice to the few descendants of this oppressed people who among us have struggled into a nominal freedom, to assist them on these easy terms to return to Africa, the land of their forefathers; where a country perfectly salubrious to them is provided for their reception, where they may enjoy the full blessing of competence and freedom—participate in the privileges of the gospel,—and become themselves, peradventure, useful missionaries among their heathen brethren? Is it not absolutely unjust to hold our fellowmen in bondage? And is it not then an act of justice, and of justice only, to adopt any safe and practicable measure, that may tend, sooner or later,

to promote their emancipation, and remove the awful curses consequent on slavery, from our country and from our children?

I might appeal to your *wisdom* in support of this cause; and remind you that you are not called upon to aid in making some doubtful experiment: The experiment has been made—it is crowned with success:—and in contributing to the funds of this Society, you are assisting to give stability to a cause, which presents the most rational prospect of removing an evil that is daily gathering strength, and assuming a more alarming aspect; a cause, which I, at least, for one, am convinced requires but the national support to ensure it complete success,—in draining off gradually, but surely, our slave population. I might remind you that every hour is precious. The increase of the black population, more especially in the south, vastly exceeds that of the whites: the disparity of number is daily becoming less—and by and by, things continuing unchanged, the blacks will be immensely the majority. Something must be done, and done immediately.

Do you want further motives? Look towards heaven! You see a God seated on the throne, who retains vengeance in his own hands, and declares he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Do you still hesitate? Look to the far famed Hispaniola! You there witness the genuine fruits of slavery! Oh! it chills the heart to think of such scenes being acted over again in our own borders, among our countrymen, our brethren in the south! Are you yet incredulous? Turn but to the annals of the last few years: nay, of the last few weeks. You hear of insurrection, and mur-

der, and flight, and of bloody retribution! Here you may see a cloud arising—small indeed at present, but who can say how speedily or how widely it may spread, and how darkly it may lower,—or how soon it may burst in sudden overwhelming fury on the unsuspecting guilty! Does wisdom, in anticipation of such awful visitation on our borders, prompt no timely effort to avert it?

But waving these motives, *I lay my appeal to your benevolence.* You are men, and swayed by the common feelings of humanity. A Society now urges its claims upon you whose object is of the most benevolent character, and the most important tendency. Their object is no less than to lead the way for the accomplishment of one of the grandest schemes of mercy that ever entered the mind of man. It is not for a few solitary sufferers, declining under the weight of years, and sinking under the power of disease, that they plead;—it is for thousands, for millions, suffering under the cruelest scourge that ever afflicted man! It is not for some obscure hamlet destitute of the gospel,—it is not for some insignificant heathen tribe, for whose conversion they are labouring: it is for the enlightening, and converting of an immensely numerous people among ourselves. It is for the enlightening of a whole continent, swarming with millions of inhabitants, whose conversion appears practicable in this way and in no other. This Society has already expended twenty thousand dollars,—and some of the brightest ornaments of humanity as Mills, and Andrews, and Winn, and Bacon have cheerfully sacrificed their invaluable lives in this benevolent cause;—but they have amply effected their object. They have secured a safe, a fertile, and a salubrious retreat for the coloured man in the

land of his fathers,—where he may enjoy the blessings of rational freedom and equal rights,—with all the comforts of social life,—and the high privileges of religion. God has smiled upon their efforts,—he has sent down his Spirit on this colony—and from it he has gathered sheep into his fold:—he is already touching the hearts of some of the natives, and opening their eyes.

This Colony is yet feeble, it is true, and needs your fostering care; but it affords ample encouragement to hope that if fostered, it will prove a blessed asylum for a wretched people:—and it is already beginning to appear among the African tribes—"like a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid—yea a light to lighten them that sit in darkness." Having thus successfully entered upon the plan, the Colonization Society turn to you,—and ask you shall this colony perish?—And perish it must without further assistance. They turn to the Christian public, and ask them to engage in this great work, and carry it forward to its completion. Do you deplore the evils of slavery? Here is a plan perfectly practicable, for gradually diminishing and ultimately eradicating them. Do you look with horror at the gloomy prospect opening in futurity for your children, if not for yourselves? Make an effort then to avert the impending danger, and save your country, your children, and all you love, from the horrors of indiscriminate carnage, or at least of a desperate and awful struggle—a struggle of life and of death! Above all, do you revere the God of heaven? The dark stain of national crime rests upon us. Seek to efface it,—seek to arrest the threatening stroke! Do you love the Redeemer? Do you prize the hopes of salvation through him?—Cast your eye on two millions of

your fellow-men within your borders,—yet almost utterly destitute of a knowledge of him, whose blood flowed for them as freely as for you!—Do you feel the worth of your own souls? As precious—as enduring—and as capable of endless suffering and of endless enjoyment as your souls, is the soul of every coloured man in this country, and that of every one of the countless millions of Africa!—For their salvation no other name is provided *but the name of Jesus!* Of this name they are ignorant,—and in this ignorance thousands are daily perishing. Aid this Society to attempt some reparation for the countless wrongs our fathers have inflicted on degraded Africa, by returning her children to her bosom, civilized—and taking along with them the blessings of the gospel of peace.

My brethren, the shafts of death are flying thick among us; the bell tolls almost incessantly to summon us to inter young and old, who have been suddenly removed. Your summons and mine will soon come, and may be close at hand. In the awful moment of death, which of us will regret the most liberal contribution to aid in checking the miseries of slavery, and re-transporting the degraded African to the land of his origin, that he may carry along with him the blessings of the gospel to the benighted tribes of his own colour. And when we meet these Ethiopians at the bar of God, and see some of them mingling with the redeemed, who of us will not recollect with pleasure—'twas in part by my aid, that "*this people which walked in darkness have seen a great light.*"